

issue number 1

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# the rebel lion

ROARING OUR SWEET WAR

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## 100 YEARS OF CRUELTY ARTAUD CONFERENCE



WOUNDED KNEE (1890)  
DREYFUS/DEVIL'S ISLAND (1894)  
OLD ABORIGINALS' PROTECTION ACT (1897)  
KING LEOPOLD'S CONGO (1897)  
ST. PETERSBURG (1905)  
SUFFRAGETTE HUNGER STRIKES (1913)  
ARMENIA (1915)  
THE SOMME (1916)  
KRONSTADT (1921)  
GREAT DEPRESSION (1929)  
SOVIET COLLECTIVISATION (1932)  
ABYSSINIA (1936)  
GUERNICA (1937)  
NANKING (1937)  
BABI YAR (1941)  
DRESDEN (1945)  
NAGASAKI (1945)  
MARALINGA (1957)  
GREAT LEAP FORWARD (1958)  
SHARPEVILLE (1960)  
THALIDOMIDE (1962)  
MY LAI (1968)  
AMIN'S UGANDA (1971)  
PINOCHET'S CHILE (1973)  
CHELMSFORD (1973)  
KHMER ROUGE (1975)  
SABRA & SHATILA (1982)  
DILI (1991)  
BOSNIA (1992)  
RWANDA (1995)

WHAT'S THERE TO

# CELEBRATE?

Welcome to the first issue of *the Rebel Lion*. This 'zine was started out of a desire to see more information published from an anarchist point of view. As more and more the mass media monopolies pump out their increasingly conservative and intolerant propaganda the need for an alternative is obvious.

*The Rebel Lion* is not aligned to any group but aims to

- provide a voice for those opposed to hierarchical and oppressive systems and the beliefs and teachings which support them
- publish and disseminate materials which promote freedom, and challenge the (imposed) notions that we need rule and international capitalism can provide for humanity
- support the cooperation of anarchists and others who are working against authoritarianism, sexism, racism, discrimination on any basis, intolerance and speciesism —and believe CHANGE IS POSSIBLE

Change, especially when it's against the dominant capitalist culture, doesn't happen by itself.



Hopefully *the Rebel Lion* will, along with increasing organisation and cooperation between anarchists and others opposed to the coercive society in which we live, give rise to discussion and action toward a non-hierarchical and decent life for all.

*The Rebel Lion* is for now, and hopefully, on a continuing basis, a free publication. Reproduction and distribution is done on the cheap or for free, if possible. For this reason circulation is limited to a few hundred copies—small donations of copying/printing services, postage stamps or even cash will see this publication reach more people.

Many thanks go to everyone who's helped, especially the contributors, who delivered on short notice: Peter McGregor, Nik Lam, James Hutchings, Rob Sparrow, Paul Waters, Jenny Baxter; to everyone who's provided the funds, advice and assistance; to The State Adversary/Anarchist Alliance of Aotearoa, Chris Dubrow and iNsuRge, Michael McClure (for the title), and everyone who has helped with distribution.

—Matthew Sherwood.

**Contributions** can be sent to the *Rebel Lion*, PO Box 6, Whalan 2770 or emailed to [mj.sherwood@nepean.uws.edu.au](mailto:mj.sherwood@nepean.uws.edu.au). Contributions are preferred on disk or by email, disks will be returned if accompanied by return postage.

*Opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect the views of the editor or the Rebel Lion.*

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## Cat@lyst

**Pedestrians, public transport and pushbikes on the info super hype way.**

Cat@lyst is a voluntarily created and maintained group who provide access to e-mail and other internet services for a minimal fee to activists and others who are interested in learning more about, or gaining access to this relatively new medium. We also have desk top publishing facilities for members and others who would otherwise have no access.

Cat@lyst is a 2 year old project of Community Access Technology. Conceived when many people complained that for

low income individuals and community groups, access to new technology was almost impossible, and was alienating people instead of bringing them together.

Cat@lyst can be found at the back room of Black Rose Anarchist Bookshop (583a King Street, Newtown 2042 - 9519 9194) on the web [www.cat.org.au](http://www.cat.org.au) and email [cat@cat.org.au](mailto:cat@cat.org.au). A copy of the Cat@lyst FAQ can be had by emailing [catfaq@cat.org.au](mailto:catfaq@cat.org.au).

# Homage to what?

Peter McGregor

for AS-IF (Anarcho-Situationist-Insurrectionary-Fuckwits)

During the 1920s & 1930s the forces of barbarism were organising themselves into a movement called fascism. The war against these forces broke out in Spain in 1936, & it can be argued that had fascism been crushed there & then, the Second World War could've been prevented ... George Orwell was one of many foreigners who went to Spain to join the resistance to fascism. His tribute *Homage to Catalonia*, focuses upon a region where the resistance went beyond defeating fascism. In Catalonia people were going for total social revolution—as a solution to the kind of exploitative social system that fostered fascism.

In the 1980s & 1990s barbarism has changed its face & name to neo-liberalism. Since January 1, 1994 there has been a rebellion in Chiapas, the region of southeastern Mexico bordering Guatemala. This was launched on the very day that NAFTA (North America Free Trade Agreement), came into effect, in order to indicate a refusal of the neo-liberalism that NAFTA stands for. The rebels called themselves Zapatistas (EZLN), embracing the values of the Mexican revolution of the 1910s, embodied in the anarchist Emiliano Zapata. (1) Could this be the outbreak of the war against neo-liberalism?

The 100 Years of Cruelty conference (12-15 September, Sydney) seemed an opportunity to raise this question. The flippancy & ambiguity in the conference organisers' publicity—'celebrating' 100 years of cruelty; 'the need for cruelty is as great, if not greater than ever'—suggested the gap between experience & its representation that Debord attacks in his concept of the spectacle. Here was a constituency of learned people, well aware of the continuing historical actualities of barbarism, yet compromised by their academic/artistic positions. So, Johanna Trainor & I produced a glossy leaflet, *Homage to Chiapas*, detouring the graphics & rhetoric of the conference publicity (see cover). It was handed out AS-IF it was official, at the Derrida session, & people took it in that spirit.

The image we substituted for Artaud's was apparently a puzzle: was it the dreaded Saddam (in the news at the time), or Gaddafi, or Assad? One suggestion was Burt Reynolds! Nancy Burson's (1983) composite of 'Big Brother' (of Stalin, Mussolini, Mao, Hitler & Khomeini) seems benign, but maybe that is the

contemporary expression & representation of cruelty—"we were doing it for their benefit," says Senator Herron about the stolen Aboriginal children. (2) Instead of indulging the spectacle of cruelty, with the conference's list of stars, we listed, chronologically, some of the barbaric cruelties of the spectacle over the last 100 years. Some conference participants got our message & came back for more copies.



Original publicity for the Artaud Conference

Would people believe that Jacques Derrida, Julia Kristeva & all the conference presenters had produced a joint paper, supporting revolution, & urging people to go & join the Zapatistas? How did Jacques, Julia, etc. respond to the question: "Why should WE go join the Zapatistas? YOU haven't!" We'd sure like to know.

According to one of the conference organisers, Alan Cholodenko, Derrida's appearance (sic) was a 'central moment in the intellectual life of this country'. Who are they kidding? The Clancy auditorium was less than half full, while the Dalai Lama was drawing thousands, as Noam Chomsky had done last year. Until Derrida & this academic/artistic milieu make the jump off

the fence—away from the critical-distance posture—& engage with the struggles for freedom (like Chomsky & the Lama), their appeal, & what they have to offer, will remain limited. It's not just the abstract, convoluted language, but the displacement of human agency & the mystification of subjectivity that loses many of us: what are Derrida, Kristeva et al DOING to change the world, & what do their analyses suggest we can do to overthrow barbarism? Where & how does their appropriation of radical others—like Artaud—transcend recuperation?

The conference's claim for Artaud's voice as 'irrecuperable' was an ironic contrast with their own terms of engagement with his life & work—their use of intellectual & artistic 'stars' & performances, the reduction of cruelty to spectacle, & the reign of ideologies of the fragmentary.

Our (written) text (aka Chapter 24, of Raoul Vaneigem's *The Revolution of Everyday Life!*) is the best appraisal we know of Artaud. Raoul sees Artaud's life's work as a somewhat contradictory COMPOSITE, rather than separating & romanticising its parts. (3) The Situationists have these wonderfully illuminating & empowering critiques—detournements—of the totality that much post-modernism lacks. (4)

We learnt much about the last 100 years of cruelty —& its representation— in producing this leaflet. To cite Bosnia (or Rwanda) in general seems too much of a generalisation. It is incidents like the 16 June (1995) Serb shelling of people queuing for water in Sarajevo (7 killed, 10 wounded) that reveal everyday barbarism. Of Babi Yar, as the beginning of the final solution, rather than Auschwitz as the culmination. For an OZ leaflet to not mention Bougainville & West Papua was grossly incongruous: Max Watts' "Some Cardinal Rules (for) Australian Media & Military Reporting on Bougainville" cleverly dissects official representations of cruelty. Also, we may have under emphasised the preeminent role of the USA as empire, in what has after all been called the American century. Consider for instance, the coups & their legacies, against say Mossadeq in Iran (1953) & Arbenz in Guatemala (1954), but also that 'theatre of cruelty' staged by the US & USSR, the Cuban missile crisis (1961), where the world was held on the brink of nuclear war. (Thanks Jack.) Species-ism as a globally widespread & systemic, yet apparently

unconscious (?) mode of cruelty only got a token mention. The banality of, & hence the tolerance for, the daily taken-for-granted cruelties to animals is but another aspect of global capitalism's drive to dominate & devour nature. (5)

So, whether time will be longer than rope is up to us: more cruelty or beyond cruelty? The barbarism of a third world war or a no-peace-without-justice-freedom-&-equality dividend?

*PS: I have had to postpone my own joining of the Zapatistas—I couldn't get permission ... My Faculty turned down my study leave application (would've been quite a lively sabbatical): what could I learn, what kind of research could be undertaken, with insurgent third world indigenes & other rebels? Why, they're even/actually opposed to free trade!*

4.11.96

(1) In August this year the Zapatistas, & their expanding international solidarity movement, held an 'International Encounter for Humanity & against Neo-Liberalism', & issued *The Declaration of La Realidad*. We had intended to include, as the leaflet suggests, *The Declaration of La Realidad*, courtesy of Subcomandante Marcos et al, but just couldn't fit it in. Next time. (For more info on Chiapas & the EZLN, [www.peak.org/~justin/ezln/ezln.html](http://www.peak.org/~justin/ezln/ezln.html) or [www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/3849/gatherdx.html](http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/3849/gatherdx.html)) [see page 15—Ed.]

**Is this conference serious in 'celebrating' cruelty, agony etc? What would Antonin think? We wonder how much the push for this conference is a parasitic recuperation of Artaud's very life, let alone his push to change life beyond cruelty, agony etc towards freedom and pleasure. What do YOU think? And just who are you?**

(2) Another of Burson's composites (Beauty (1982): Jane Fonda, Jacqueline Bisset, Diane Keaton, Brooke Shields, Meryl Streep), is touring Oz as part of the BEYOND RECOGNITION exhibition of Contemporary International Photography. Those familiar with Burson's work may notice that the left & right sides of the face have been flipped, for the technical reason of allowing the white lettering of THE GREAT LEAP FORWARD

to be visible: Mao et al have a lot to answer for, but we wanted to focus upon just one specific, but massive, cruelty of theirs.

(3) Some things may get lost a bit in the translation, & do remember, it's at the end of a whole book!

(4) Sadie Plant's *The Most Radical Gesture* reveals this contrast.

(5) The ROCK AGAINST CRUELTY concert has been postponed, & is to be held this summer (check details with SARA, Student Animal Rights Activists ... see pages 13-14)

Peter McGregor works as a lecturer in media studies in the Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences at UWS, Nepean. Johanna Trainor works as a teacher of photography in the Faculty of Arts & Media at the Hunter Institute of Technology.



# ANARCHISM AND ORGANISATION

Rob Sparrow

"But isn't an anarchist organisation a contradiction in terms?" How often I have heard this question, usually uttered in a mocking tone, when I've mentioned that I'm going to an anarchist collective meeting or described my politics as "organised class struggle anarchism." The idea that anarchy means chaos and is opposed to organisation is a widely promoted right wing myth which is partially responsible for the lack of influence of anarchism today. Sadly, I have even met many who call themselves anarchists who believe this and who will argue at length that they are "opposed to organisation".

But this is ludicrous. You might as well be opposed to gravity. There is no avoiding organisation. Even "let everyone do exactly what they want" is a principle of organisation. Indeed it is often a bad one, which allows the strong to exploit the weak. So anarchism is about organisation. It is about co-operation amongst equals, free of oppressive power relations. But perhaps anarchists should be opposed to formal structures and principles of organisation? Even this strikes me as stupid. Informal principles of organisation are often insidiously hierarchical and oppressive. This is particularly the case with regards their gender and sexual politics. They allow those already with social power, whether instituted as social networks, education, control of information or simply loud voices to dominate groups and exercise de facto authority. Formal organisational structure can serve to bring power relations out into the open and to oppose the centralisation and exercise of power. So there is nothing contradictory about the idea of an anarchist organisation.

Indeed the question of organisation is THE question for anarchists today, for two reasons. Firstly because if we don't get organised anarchists will never constitute a serious political force in Australia, let alone one which might be able to work towards the revolution

necessary to create anarchy. But secondly, a modern anarchism must confront the reality of modern urban post-industrial society, which is that such a society cannot function without organisation—organisation on a large scale. If we think anarchy is possible today it means that we think it is possible in such a society or at least in a society which might conceivably emerge out of the revolutionary transformation of such a society. We can no longer point to networks or federations of villages or peasant communities as a model for the future. We need to demonstrate to people that it is possible to organise a modern post-industrial society without recourse to authority. To my mind anarchism is the belief that it is possible to organise effectively and efficiently without authority or hierarchy. Unless you believe this you don't believe that anarchy is ever really a possibility.

So an urgent task for anarchists today is the development of anti-authoritarian and non-hierarchical organisations in which to develop and promote our ideas. Our ability to organise ourselves is a crucial test of the ideals that we advocate. How can we tell people that it is possible to organise a modern urban society along anarchist lines when committed anarchists are not even capable of organising to promote their ideas and produce a newspaper?

If anarchists prove incapable of organising themselves to be a real political force then their politics will ultimately be irrelevant in Australia today. Anarchism will remain a purely negative critique of hierarchy and authority. There is a place for such a critique. But unless we can offer a better alternative, people will be correct to dismiss anarchism as a pie-in-the-sky dream. Those who want to go about changing the world will be forced to look elsewhere. If anarchists want to win these people to anarchism—and with them change the world—then it's time to get organised.

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AETA (Australian East Timor Association) meets the 4th Wednesday of each month in the Born Holt Room, Level 3, UTS Tower, Broadway at 6.30pm and demonstrates the 4th Thursday of each month on the Sydney Town Hall steps. The first speaker for 1997 will be Andrew McNaughton—January 22.  
AETA office (02)9310 4510, or Jeff 9560 5563, Steven 9331 5986.

Nobel prize winner Jose Ramos-Horta will be speaking in Sydney mid-February. Details from ETRA (02)9891 5861 or AETA.

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Tandem Thrust  
U.S./Australian Military Exercises.

In March 1997 over 20,000 military personnel (& nuke powered & possibly armed vessels) will trample over the Great Barrier Reef and surrounding areas, putting at risk endangered fauna and flora.

For more info on on-site actions and preliminary media campaigns contact:  
Australian Anti-Bases Campaign, PO Box A899, Sydney South 2000 - (02) 9267 2772

# iNsuRge

Sydney based pop-rock/industrial outfit iNsuRge this year released their first album, *Power to the Poison People*, levelling their sights on the petro-chemical industries, (everyone's favourite) the International Monetary Fund, and our speculation driven "free market" economy to name a few. Turning out albums of protests since their 1994 EP *I.M.F.*, iNsuRge has been praised for their anarchic sensibilities and at the same time, since signing to major-label Warner, come under heavy criticism. Vocalist and song-writer Chris Dubrow talks about working for a more autonomous society in the music biz...

>Have you perceived any resistance from record companies and broadcasters, who after all are largely owned and controlled by tentacles of the same major media owners and transnationals which are targeted by iNsuRge?

Not really resistance, it's been quite interesting for us on this level, but for the record company, their primary role is to make profit by selling records, so the bean-counters there couldn't give a shit what the lyrics say, so long as the young people dig it and buy it—they're happy. The other thing is what authors like Susan George talk about and that is that even within the lofty heights of the worlds darkest corporations, there are individuals within these structures that are true progressive thinkers and always try to subvert the situation where-ever possible, and we certainly have had people from deep within the structure of the record company who actively push our agenda because they see it as kind of legitimising working there.

As for broadcasters, the same applies really, they see their role as attracting ratings for advertising, there isn't many people within most commercial radio stations that would even understand what the words of an average iNsuRge song mean, they just hum the tune and if the listeners want it they just stick it on.

>How does the industry treat bands pushing a heavy political agenda, or education/participation over entertainment/spectatorship?

It's a kind of mixed bag overall, it often comes down to the individual person as opposed to one magazine or booking agent or whatever, there are some very conservative people working in the underground side of the industry who say dumb shit like art and politics don't mix, and the opposite is true with some very

conservatively perceived aspects of the industry. Generally, we haven't had a big problem.

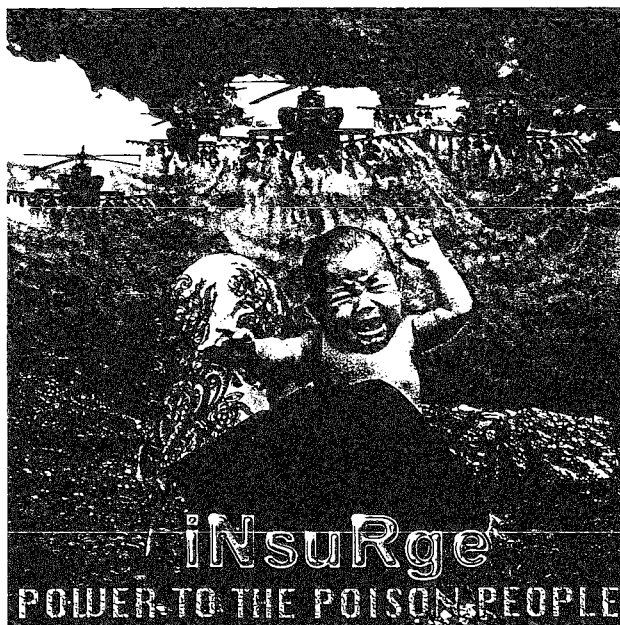
As long as you can strike the balance between entertainment and education you are pretty safe. In interviews we often say about our live performances that if you want to get into the ideas there are all the opportunities for you to do so, thru the lyrics and the liner notes and the web site and the iNsuRge research service, our fanzine... but if you just want to get pissed and jump up and down, we're down with that, I mean nobody can think politics 24 hours a day, you gotta have fun too!

>For a long time now popular music has been overtly used to politically educate listeners, how effective do you believe this approach?

Well poetry has had a very long history of planting new ideas into peoples heads, and I think popular music is just an extension of this, and one that is very effective compared to other mediums. Mainstream journalists and the like just don't get the editorial leeway to write truly subversive stories; theatre, books and traditional "art" tend to only get thru to an elite, mainstream politics is next to useless because of the nature of our bullshit stick-to-the-party-line-or-die system, and hey nobody trusts a politician, and I guess the only

comparative way to really get thru to the masses is film-making. I think music rates very highly in this aspect and this is why I personally forfeited handing out pamphlets to uni students and hung up the old soapbox to choose this direction.

[continued on page 9]



# Can the Left Work Together?

James Hutchings  
for the Newtown Political Collective

**A spectre is haunting the Left: the spectre of cooperation. Almost all factions have united against it.**

There's no denying that the revolutionary Left is in trouble. In the fact of widespread and seemingly permanent economic crisis, and a deep cynicism about mainstream politics, it has failed to grow, and in fact is probably getting slightly smaller. The idea of the 'end of history,' that revolutionary ideas had no chance after the death of the USSR, is completely wrong. The USSR was an obvious minus for socialism since the 1950s. In the case of the anarchists, the failure of the USSR should have been a bonus or at least have made no difference.

One obvious factor in the Left's failure is sectarianism: the tendency of revolutionary groups to spend a lot of time and energy attacking each other over what seem to be minor differences. Certainly I've found that this is a major reason for people dropping out, or more often not joining in the first place. I was therefore glad when my group, the Newtown Political Collective, decided to have a series of forums on the subject of Left unity.

The response from Resistance, the largest socialist group, was immediate and decisive:

they decided we were homophobic. This was because of an article in *Angry People*, a magazine put out by an anarchist group and which we distributed at a few rallies. The article contained such vicious bile as

"*Angry People* have no beef with a person's sexuality. We're not saying that to be gay or lesbian is wrong in the slightest." Apparently, we then went down to their office and abused their gay and lesbian members. Perhaps we taunted them with abuse about how we respected them and supported their right to sexual freedom. Of course none of Resistance's actions had anything to do with the fact that eight or so of their members had joined NPC.

Actually none of this is funny. Anti-gay hate crime is a real and horrible fact—it's not

something you use to score political points. The Left used to have a habit of calling everyone it disagreed with a fascist. Eventually people didn't take accusations of fascism from the Left very seriously. This of course was a great help to the real fascists.

On the positive side, we did get a certain amount of support from individuals (some of them even came to the forums). The upshot of it is, that we're planning to keep having the forums. However, it's a bit hard when we're banned from *Green Left* (the paper of the DSP, of which Resistance is the youth wing), and when Resistance tells its members not to talk to us. Actually we did show that the Left can work together in a way: Socialist Alternative (no connection to the magazine *Social Alternatives*) also decided that any of their members who come to any of our meetings will be kicked out.

So, can the Left work together? I would answer by saying that the Left is divided into two. The two groups aren't socialists and anarchists, or 'our group' and the 'fake Left.' The two groups are those who are interested in promoting the movement and those who are interested in promoting their faction. The second group is bigger and more vicious than I thought. They also tend to be the ones in control. But I still

think that the first group is in the majority (in Resistance as much as in other groups). We intend to keep talking to the rest of the Left—it's peoples own decision whether they listen.



If anyone wants to write to us on this subject, my postal address is James Hutchings, PO Box 503, Newtown NSW 2042.



James' discussion paper from the forum can be found on pages 8—9

# Why Can't the Left Work Together?

Discussion Paper prepared by the Newtown Political Collective

## Something's Gotta Give

The revolutionary Left can still affect ordinary people. For example, we are about the only group that wants people to come to the education rallies. Thousands of people do come out, showing that in at least one important area our ideas are the 'mainstream' ones. The idea of 'the end of history' is only true if we let it be true.

## What's the problem?

The capitalists have the credibility and charisma personified by John Howard. We should, on the face of it, be in the middle of a revolution.

Every group seems to have been doing roughly the same thing for at least the last ten years. We think that everyone's ready for a change...

## The Judean People's Front and it's Deadly Rival, The People's Front of Judea

We want to start by discussing one problem in particular: sectarianism, the idea that the various revolutionary groups are rivals rather than allies with a few disagreements. It isn't the only problem, but it's probably the one to start with.

At the moment groups can't have proper discussions about their internal culture—they'd just turn into (and probably start as) "my group is better than yours—you're the fake left!" We should point out that NPC isn't necessarily any better. Everyone is part of the problem, just as everyone will have to be part of the solution.

So, we're proposing a federation, or a working alliance. It's actually quite a small step. We don't ask that the groups dissolve themselves or change the way they operate (or that anyone join NPC). What we want is that the groups, and the large number of lefties who don't want to join any existing group, form an umbrella organisation. The organisation wouldn't have any power over existing groups, but it would encourage debate, coordinate action, and generally try and replace sectarianism with unity.

## What! You Ask Us to Work With the Labor Party! Intolerable!

Nope. When we say 'the Left,' we mean the revolutionary Left, ie. those who are either in or more or less agree with the policies of the various anarchist groups, the DSP, NPC, ISO, Resistance, Left Alliance, Socialist Alternative etc. If we get a good organisation going, a few members of the Labor Left and the Australian Greens would probably join. But, we think that revolutionary groups can't meaningfully join with reformists.

## The Distant Rumble of Tanks

Also, we don't think that the group should include those who think that authoritarian socialism (Stalinism etc) is any sort of model. Complete freedom and equality was not a characteristic of the Tienanmien Square massacre.

## Summary

The group should aim to include all those, and only those, who think that

- Capitalism can't provide any sort of decent life for humanity
- Parliament can't abolish capitalism
- Therefore, the group should exist to incite a revolution
- Authoritarian socialism is a model of what to avoid, not what to work towards

This obviously is only a very very rough outline: there's nothing about the environment or sexism, racism or a lot of other important things. Filling that in is up to everyone reading this...

## Some Advantages of a Unified Group

Proper Debate—at the moment, there's a lot of thesis and antithesis, but not a lot of synthesis. Stuff like people's attitude to Cuba is important and shouldn't be papered over. But at the moment it doesn't seem to be possible to argue properly with people from other groups. You can get into shouting matches easily enough. So, more debates that mean something, less arguments that mean nothing.

One Loud Voice Instead of Several Little Ones—A lot of people get into Left groups through issues like the anti-uranium one. At the moment the Left tends to be heavily involved in these campaigns. But, because of the number of groups, people can go away thinking 'it was attended by four or five little leftie or single-issue groups.' It would be more effective if there was one large group. If there was a federation people would go away thinking 'it was organised by the Revolutionary Federation.' That would have to mean that more people would make the decision to join. Also, of course, a federation would have the strength to lead these campaigns, and let the liberals join in on our terms or not at all. We don't particularly enjoy standing up the back listening to some idiot talking about restraint.

Everyone Can Be Comrades—At the moment there's always a certain tension between people in different groups. There's always the worry, are they talking to me because they're interested or are they trying to convert me? Is our conversation going to turn into a conversation between two groups? In short, how honest can I be? This can't be appropriate behaviour between comrades, and it also can't encourage people to stay on the Left.



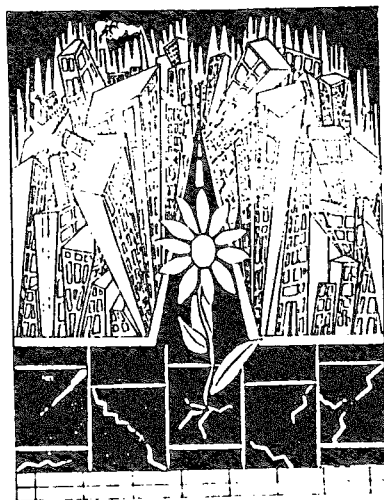
If Not This, Then What?—We can't see any group becoming a threat to capitalism by itself.

### Appendix: Some Ideas on Strategy

Recruiting—the Left seems to be quite good at getting people in. It's quite bad at keeping people. Someone said to us, "I don't care about people dropping out." We don't agree with this. Maybe there should be an emphasis on keeping people happy with the group—encouraging people to talk through any problems, recognising the difference between a serious revolutionary and a humourless one, letting people find their own level and type of involvement, recognising that everyone's contribution is equally important ... at the moment the Left recruits quite amazing numbers of people while not getting any bigger.

The Rule of the Longest-Serving Male—the Left has been known to slip into hierarchy in general and patriarchy in particular. One possible part-solution is the establishment of a group within the group: a women's caucus but with a less boring name, the only thing we want to say is that the discussion about whether to have such a group should be carried on entirely by women members. There are other groups who could be said to be in a similar position. For example, newer members often feel (probably quite accurately) that they're not given the same say as people who've been there a while. This seems to be a major reason for people dropping out.

# DARE TO



# DREAM

Civilised man [sic] will extend his [sic] principles of solidarity to the whole human race and even animals. —Kropotkin

>Conspicuous consumption appears to be one of iNsUrge's targets - how do you reconcile with record companies' money-grabbing merchandising strategies that see many people suckered into subsequent purchases of albums and singles?

Well it's all about "using" certain systems in society and that, by it's nature implies that those systems will use you back to a certain degree, but with our case, if we really want to get to the straight folk living in the 'burbs and not just preach to the converted we have to present our stuff in a way that will get thru those filtration processes. Selling records, selling concert tickets or t-shirts or being on a major label may be viewed as a sell-out or being hypocritical or what-ever, especially if, as in our case the message is "stop over-consuming," but we believe riding the system like this gives us the tools get our ideas across and is definitely worth doing, that is why we are called iNsUrge, we may be viewed as being inside the mainstream musical system, but we are very much perceived as being outside the mainstream political system. And as noted before people can work effectively for change from both inside and outside the system. The only people that are completely free of this interchange are the hippies hiding in their little self sufficient communes, but I believe this is the political equivalent of sticking your head in a bucket of sand and hoping all the bad things in the world will just go away. If you are gonna get out in the world and fight you are automatically going to be forced inside the system in some ways. If you live in a city and have to trade for your food, or if you use any technology whether it be a computer for communications or a guitar with a distortion pedal you have been pulled into the consumption system.

\*

iNsUrge can be found on the net <[www.real.com.au](http://www.real.com.au)>. iNsUrge publishes a quarterly fanzine iNsUrge Research Service—send 4 stamps to I.R.S., PO Box 335, Broadway NSW 2007

## iNsUrge giveaway

Score yourself a copy if iNsUrge's album *Power to the Poison People* simply by writing to the Rebel Lion. The best letter received by February 28 will get a compact disc copy of the album posted to them.

Comment, criticism, rants, praise, or articles can be sent to

the Rebel Lion  
PO Box 6  
Whalan NSW 2770

make sure you say if you want to be considered for the iNsUrge album

# The Question of Food

## Food Co-ops Nik Lam for Pigweed

### What is a food co-op?

Everybody has to eat. The distressing thing is that most of us are completely restricted in the way in which we obtain our food. Supermarkets are deceptive in the variety they give us. You have probably heard the statistics—a few massive corporations being behind the vast majority of products, repackaged several times in different colours and brand names to blind us with benign choices. We grudgingly accept the supermarket queue, week after week, joining the herds through the turnstiles, aisles and the checkouts.

Alternatives to a lifestyle dependent on this way of getting food are becoming less available as supermarkets and the like (for instance RSLs) replace more and more local businesses. Going to the opposite extreme, food cooperatives exist to counter this culture of monopoly which does not consider the individual person, but instead only responds to the biggest collective of consumers. It seems that enough people have become alienated or concerned about the problems associated with our culture's consumption so that cooperatives are again gaining popularity and momentum.

While cooperatives may have a tradition of being agricultural amalgamations (United Dairies, who provide Sydney's milk originally began as a cooperative, as I recently read on a carton), the idea has been embraced as a means of achieving ecologically sustainable living for city dwellers. Traditionally, small scale producers band together to give themselves leverage in the marketplace. On the other hand, the urban food cooperative has more or less become the reverse of this: a group of people banding together to give them autonomy from the forces which would otherwise direct us to consume products which may be unhealthy for us, for others, or for the environment.

Exactly what a food co-op's aims are may vary as much as the views of individuals may vary. Even within a single cooperative, the diversity of views on what the coop means to each and every member can be astounding. The goal most likely to be common to all cooperative members however, is autonomy from established systems or the provision of alternatives to them. For this reason it is difficult to generalise about food coops, although it can safely be said that most collectives who form coops are sympathetic to ethical and environmental issues.

One of the more recent cooperatives in Sydney was set up in 1994 at the University of New South Wales going by the name of Pigweed. The structure of this cooperative was created as non-hierarchical and it was decided (by consensus) that decision making was to be by consensus. A couple of prominent issues to be dealt

with using the food co-operative were waste reduction and the promotion of sustainable and ethical agriculture.

### Waste Reduction

It's a sign of how superficial we are that presentation has become so important to marketers. Take a trip down the aisles of Coles with this thought in mind and you will see the extent to which packaging is used in selling items. Then think about the landfill that it all amounts to. Imagine trying to deal with the waste products of a weeks shopping without your council to conveniently remove it from your sight at regular intervals. You could have your own smoky mountain in your backyard within a year.

As usual, until it becomes a serious economic problem to those with influence, there will be no real action taken by governments and government bodies. (Meanwhile, we are left with bogus recycling programs promoted by the plastics and chemicals industries which do nothing but appease the consciences of the mildly green.)

Via food cooperatives, individuals are having more impact on reducing this kind of waste than any government initiatives to date. At most food coops, the main experience when you obtain your food is that it is in tubs, and you only take the quantity which you need in your own container. It is weighed and paid for accordingly. The system works perfectly. There is absolutely nothing which needs to be sent to landfill. Those who obtain most of their food through this system can reduce their food packaging waste (which makes up the vast majority of household waste) to almost nothing, saving tons of resources.



Are supermarkets really the only way?

### Sustainable and Ethical Agriculture

Even anti-conservation groups like the Farmer's Federation of NSW have admitted to certain problems caused by modern agricultural practice, such as severe soil erosion. However, attempts to adopt sustainable systems are thwarted by big business, which are now tightening their talons onto the agriculture industry through insidious tactics, a recent example being the

chemical manufacturer Monsanto's release of a strain of soya bean, marketed as *Roundup Ready* which is resistant (through genetic engineering) to their own herbicide.

The food cooperative has allowed members to be much more informed about the origins of their food. The ingredients listed on packaged goods only tell a fraction of the story. The number of chemicals foreign to our bodies which are used in intensive agriculture are astounding. As many as 40 human made chemicals may be applied to a mango before it reaches the fruit market, as was recently discovered by a Pigweed member. It was recognised that while cost of organic produce is generally higher, this is the price we should be paying for non-destructive (and non-toxic) agriculture and so every effort is made to support small organic growers.

Issues of human rights are also taken into account at Pigweed, for example with the decision not to stock cashews and some lesser known products which were traced to be subsidiaries of Nestle and Coca-cola (such as Vitasoy soy milk).

Unlike obtaining stock which is not over-packaged, obtaining ethically produced food obviously requires considerably more research. As a result, (I feel that) Pigweed does not fulfil the this second objective as well as the waste reduction goals. The point is however, that we are making progress in the right direction, and for it we are a step ahead of any government legislation which would attempt to correct the same problems.

But even so, more important than the actual goals of Pigweed are the more implicit aspects of the food cooperative. By forming the cooperative we have managed to liberate ourselves to a significant extent, from restrictions which are dictated by the predominant economic structures. Pigweed has by no means solved all problems associated with food and sustainability (well, not yet anyway), but it has clearly demonstrated that food cooperatives are an improvement on a system which is now becoming unacceptable to greater numbers of people.

1 Personally, as a member of this cooperative, I find this stance inconsistent, or rather, speciest because we do stock dairy products and eggs. For support for this claim read any animal rights literature (anything with Peter Singer's name on it is usually a good place to start) and then learn about the treatment of *any* animal used for commercial purposes.

2 The cashew fruit has a toxic sap which causes serious tissue damage after repeated contact. Most cashew farmers in India, pay pickers by the amount picked, and in order to pick faster, pickers don't wear protective gloves. Eventually, pickers' fingers require amputation, and when no fingers are left, these workers are unemployable.

Pigweed is located on the ground floor, Blockhouse, University of New South Wales.  
ph 9385 6097.

Sydney's longest running, officially recognised food co-operative is *Alfalfa House*, which can be found across the street from the Enmore Theatre, Enmore St, Enmore. ph 9519 3374

A well run food co-operative exists somewhere in the Blue mountains.

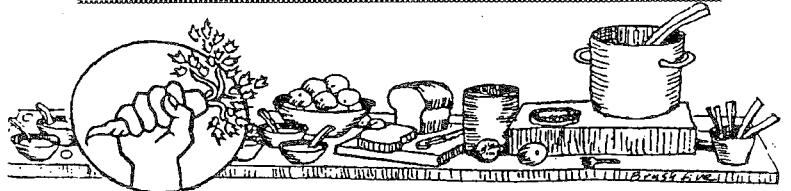
Australian National University's food coop has been running for around 20 years.

Melbourne and Monash universities are said to have spectacular and dynamic food cooperatives.

Several small centre (country) universities also have extremely successful cooperatives.

Sydney University, Manly residents and Bondi residence are all at various stages of establishing food cooperatives.

Hopefully these vague directions will provide a starting point for inspiration - go visit a co-op, join a co-op or start your own!



## Food Not Bombs - Life Not Death

Paul Walters for Sydney F.N.B.

Recently, I bought a childrens book called *Food*, based on the Channel 4 television series *Abracadabra*. In the highly enlightening (of attitude if not of facts) pages entitled 'Food Mountains,' I saw the following conversation spoken by a furry monster to another not-so-furry one called brain(!):

**BRAN** Harvests are sometimes good and sometimes bad—and that makes prices go up and down. If prices go up and down too much, farmers may go out of business. So the governments buy food when there is too much, to make sure there will be enough farmers in future to supply the food their countries need. Governments can't easily sell the surplus food either. In some countries they've even thrown the grain away and dumped the milk in the sea.

**MONSTER** I'll sell the surplus food to the poor countries. They've got hungry people.

**BRAN** But poor countries can't afford to buy from you.

**MONSTER** I'll sell it cheap, then they can sell it cheaply too.

**BRAN** All that will do is put struggling farmers in the poor countries out of business. Anyway you can't sell food like wheat to people who only like rice or maize. Poor countries certainly wouldn't want to buy surplus wine!

**MONSTER** Tell you what I'll do—just for once—I'll give the grain away to those starving people—the ones that can't afford to be fed in their own countries ... Even if it's not what they're used to, it will keep them alive.

**BRAN** A good idea but you'll have to be careful that giving away free food doesn't stop some farmers in poor countries from trying to grow crops. Anyway, it costs a lot to send food by plane. You can't afford that.

**MONSTER** No—but why can't the governments of the rich countries pay? It would be better than locking the food away to rot.

**BRAM** Ah well, now you've asked me a question even I can't answer.

If Brain had been more honest he would have said that the rich countries are run by monsters too, not cute furry ones, but ones who are ugly on the outside and inside. This exchange (indoctrination) is important because it tells us two main things about international capitalism i) it will always find excuses not to give away essentials for free (in doing so it would open capitalism to attacks and questions as to why we can't operate on another economic level—eg. a needs based one), and ii) if you can't afford essentials like food—then go die!

In our societies if you can't afford services you won't get them. That, together with the fact that governments have stolen all the land and make you pay for that most essential need, creates an air of conformity to the capitalist system—if you don't play the game you're out. For those who fall outside the system, life will be pretty harsh, basic and one of reliance on goodwill from others. Usually this means charities stepping in to place band-aids on the gaping wounds that are hunger, homelessness etc. And usually Christian charities. If you ever need an example of church and state working together to maintain the status quo, look at the issues surrounding charity. Soup kitchens, hostels, the Salvos etc. don't criticise what makes poverty, it's not even part of their concern. All they seem to do is dish out ham sandwiches and moralism in an effort to make themselves feel less guilty and more 'caring,' thus greasing the doorway to Heaven. Christian charity doesn't even believe you can achieve heaven on earth, so "suffer the little children"! As a St Vincent de Paul poster proclaimed this Christmas, "the poor will always be with us so we must do all we can to help them" (except make them not poor!).

At Food Not Bombs we believe 'Food is a right, not a privilege.' If there is food not being used, get it and redistribute it. In the U.S. where the movement began you have figures such as these pointing to the insanity of capitalism:

- 30 million people go hungry on a regular basis
- each year 46 billion pounds of edible food are thrown away
- each year US\$264b is spent on the military (and increasing every year)

In every advanced capitalist country there is massive waste. What F.N.B. can do is try and get potential landfill and process it into nutritious food for people who have little or none. If you have a few enthusiastic people, a vehicle and a few bowls, plates and spoons this can be achieved easily. The Sydney branch of F.N.B. started in 1996. We rang up a few fruit and vegetable wholesalers and retailers and asked if they have surplus every week—of course they did. A few bakeries and health food shops threw in their excess and we had a functioning F.N.B. operation. We've done food drops to women's refuges, halfway houses, served

food at a street party and indoors ones, and at Eddy Avenue feeding the homeless/hungry on Boxing Day. At the moment we don't have a vehicle (van) which would help enormously with organising food pick-ups and drop offs. People always offer F.N.B. free things including labour on projects, storage fridge, t-shirt designs, even a van (which we haven't been able to use because of the cost of registration and making it roadworthy).

Our food is always vegetarian, often vegan (no animal products), in keeping with the ethical use of land, environment, society and F.N.B. encourages. It takes 16 times less energy to grow vegetarian food as opposed to beef/dairy etc. Vegetables can be easily composted, are the most useable form of protein, vitamins etc., use much less water than livestock production—and when has anyone contracted Mad Carrot Disease!?

Get out there and do it—prove once again that it can be done without hierarchy, without leaders, without affiliations to parent groups, without rules and with caring peace, intent and individual and collective determination. The sky's the limit, make your F.N.B. what you can, just use society as a guide to what not to achieve—greed, exploitation, waste, war.



# FOOD NOT BOMBS

When you contact a potential supplier send a letter in advance with the F.N.B. logo on it and an introduction as to who you are, as well as a contact number. If they take the bait, always fit in with the best day for pick-ups that suits them. Shops are often busy enough without having to arrange packing boxes for someone that gives them no return on their time—they might decide it's easier just to dump the stuff! Often the best day is the day before the new delivery, when old stock would be replaced. Still you'd be surprised (shocked, maybe) how easy it is to get quality edible food that would otherwise become 'waste.' Obviously you'll need a kitchen, fridge/s for storage, a vehicle to take the food around, and maybe some gas burners to heat it up when you get there.

Melbourne has a F.N.B. that is a runaway success. Most of their food is organic and comes from city markets and retailers. They feed people 3 nights a week in the inner city and suburbs. They can be contacted through Barricade Books (03) 9387 6646—ask for George.

Sydney can be contacted on (02) 9550 1599 b.h.—ask for Anna.

## SURREAL ENVIRONMENT

*i'd been stuck in the flat for days now*

*no relief in sight slamming down half-cold cups of coffee on cracked wooden tables foraging through piles of torn unwashed clothes for a decent pair of jeans rubbing temples with ink stained fingers twisting strands of greasy hair around shaking out cramped hands cheap cracked noodles grabbing handfuls ceilings dripping dank seepage ripping jasmine creeping puppy barking flatmates tripping my mind is slipping*

## **SNAP SHOT OF THE LOUNGE ROOM FLOOR**

*disks stained burnt orange rings sink on aged hardcover texts dulled spines ancient ideas force themselves out sharply muted by reality they subside smoulder plot grows rekindle insidiously over the tiny spirit lamps red wine permeates warmth light silver flame - my silver flame, a fitting frame*

**IDEALS** are like **DIAMONDS**

*elusive is this is it possible to be green capitalist anti-capitalist anarchist brother sister student worker raver mosher harder, harder smashing breaking always taking wondering think i'll go*

**STOP STOP STOP** my brain I want to get off...

*And now for something completely different*

# S.A.R.A.

*Student Animal Rights Activists*

— oh what, oh what is it all about?

As most of us know by now, uni is stressful enough as it is—what with constant assessments, lectures, tutorials, poverty, lack of food and sleep, ever increasing fees, fighting for photocopiers, being angry at never finding books on library shelves where they should be, having to move away from areas we grew up in, worrying about career and jobs, having to make new circles of friends, dealing with part-time work and all the other stuff that thinking about environmental and ethical issues in any kind of depth can take a low priority.

So why should we care? There are a number of reasons why it is in our interest to be concerned with environmental issues, and not the least of all because our quality of life and indeed our very existence is dependent on basics like the kind of air we breathe, the quality of the food we eat, and the purity of the water we drink. Many of us do not live in harmony with nature, rather we manipulate the environment around us, often for short term benefits (such as razing rainforests to rear "beef" cattle for slaughter) and we consequently upset the ecological balance in our environment. In Australia, for example, our fondness for beef and beef products has lead to



enormous tracts of land being severely damaged by hard cloven hooves of the grazing "beef" cattle (which are not native to Australia), and the constant droughts and floods that plague the Australian countryside (which result in many cattle dying) add to the environmental and economic cost of our largely meat driven diets.



As S.A.R.A. already has already collated numerous fact sheets and statistics regarding the tremendous inefficiencies involved in humans eating a flesh based diet, I will not dwell on this aspect of the issue, as I am only too aware that "academic" arguments involving statistics and the like, while useful, often fall down under the weight of habits developed over a lifetime. Thus while many people may be convinced intellectually of the need to change to a more vegetarian or vegan diet, while they may realise that the global trend towards increasingly meat based diets will almost certainly spell environmental disaster, the reality is that we live in a society that pretty much whole-heartedly condones the slaughtering, marketing, purchasing and eating of an ever increasing number of animals.

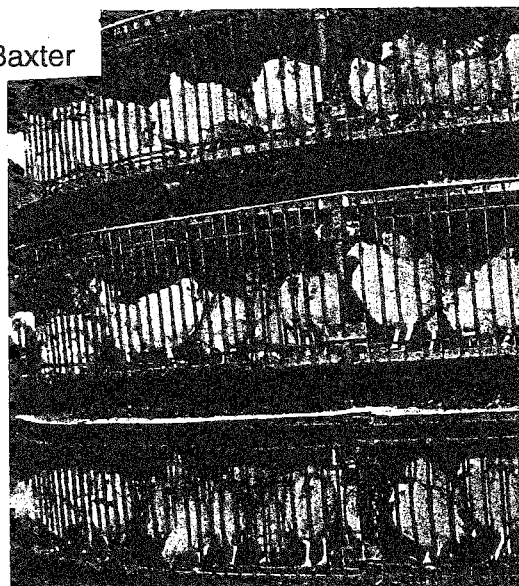
And as animals are unable to organise together and liberate themselves as humans in oppressed situations are able to do, the issue is not really a threat to the big power mongers of our world, and to many people the idea of animal liberation or animal rights is literally a joke.

Which raises the question—is it possible for animals to have rights in the same way as humans have rights (such as the right to free speech, the right to vote etc)? The answer to this question seems to be no. Human rights are a human phenomena. Animals actually have no need for rights at all if humans do not draw them into their human orbit. The rights we have set in place for ourselves (or which we are fighting for)

in order for us to cope with the complex and highly unnatural world many of us live in are not extended in anyway to accommodate the animals we deem fit to "use" in some way. A rat, for example, left to itself in the wild has no need for any "rights," as it is able to function effectively using genetic instincts which have evolved over many years. This same rat placed in a laboratory cage would not, however, be able to survive without human intervention, and is now in need of the "right" to water and food as required, as well as the "right" to exercise and mate. Some people would argue that the rat is not in need of rights as much as that humans need to exercise responsibility, and this recognition that we need to be responsible for the animals we displace is at least a start, but does not deal with the philosophy behind the displacement of the animal in the first place.

Why have human animals—and we are animals—been able to evolve to the point where we are able to manipulate other species in a way which no natural selection process would allow? If our brains are products of nature, why would nature—a blind force admittedly—allow us to progress in intelligence to the point where we can destroy our driving force? I do not know the answer to these questions, but I can categorically state I do not think we should use our superior intelligence to manipulate other species just because we can, as ultimately this is simply the strong taking advantage of the weak. Some may argue that this is simply the law of the jungle, yet we know that to a degree what gives us our "humanness" is our ability to look after our sick, weak, disabled and elderly, and that we have thwarted just about every other law of nature—so this argument comes across to me as being a bit weak.

Jenny Baxter



Anyway, if you are interested in any of the issues mentioned above come along to one of our meetings (usually in vego cafes), or contact us for more info:

Post: S.A.R.A., PO Box 6, Whalan 2770  
email: sara@fisher.biz.usyd.edu.au  
mj.sherwood@nepean.uws.edu.au  
phone: Jenny—(02) 9357 7851

# Excerpts from the Declaration of La Realidad

## To the people of the world: Brothers and Sisters:

During the last years, the power of money has presented a new mask over its criminal face. Disregarding borders, with no importance given to races or colours, the Power of money humiliates dignities, insults honesties and assassinates hopes. Re-named as "Neoliberalism," the historic crime in the concentration of privileges, wealth and impunities, democratizes misery and hopelessness. A new world war is waged, but now against the entire humanity. As in all world wars, what is being sought is a new distribution of the world. By the name of "globalization" they call this modern war which assassinates and forgets. The new distribution of the world consists in concentrating power in power and misery in misery.

The new distribution of the world excludes "minorities." The indigenous, youth, women, homosexuals, lesbians, people of colour, immigrants, workers, peasants; the majority who make up the world basements are presented, for power, as disposable. The new distribution of the world excludes the majorities. The modern army of financial capital and corrupt governments advance conquering in the only way it is capable of: destroying. The new distribution of the world destroys humanity. The new distribution of the world only has one place for money and its servants. Men, women and machines become equal in servitude and in being disposable. The lie governs and it multiplies itself in means and methods.

A new lie is sold to us as history. The lie about the defeat of hope, the lie about the defeat of dignity, the lie about the defeat of humanity. The mirror of power offers us an equilibrium in the balance scale: the lie about the victory of cynicism, the lie about the victory of servitude, the lie about the victory of neoliberalism. Instead of humanity, it offers us stock market value indexes, instead of dignity it offers us globalization of misery, instead of hope it offers us an emptiness, instead of life it offers us the international of terror. Against the international of terror representing neoliberalism, we must raise the international of hope. Hope, above borders, languages, colours, cultures, sexes, strategies, and thoughts, of all those who prefer humanity alive.

The international of hope. Not the bureaucracy of hope, not the opposite image and, thus, the same as that which annihilates us. Not the power with a new sign or new clothing. A breath like this, the breath of dignity. A flower, yes, the flower of

hope. A song, yes, the song of life. Dignity is that nation without nationality, that rainbow that is also a bridge, that murmur of the heart no matter what blood lives it, that rebel irreverence that mocks borders, customs and wars. Hope is that rejection of conformity and defeat. Life is what they owe us: the right to govern and to govern ourselves, to think and act with a freedom that is not exercised over the slavery of others, the right to give and receive what is just. For all this, along with those who, beyond borders, races and colours, share the song of life, the struggle against death, the flower of hope and the breath of dignity...

## The Zapatista Army of National Liberation Speaks...

To all who struggle for human values of democracy, liberty and justice.

To all who force themselves to resist the world crime known as "Neoliberalism" and aim for humanity and hope to be better, be synonymous of future.

To all individuals, groups, collectives, movements, social, civic and political organizations, neighbourhood associations, cooperatives, all the lefts known and to be known; non-governmental organizations, groups in solidarity with struggles of the world people, bands, tribes, intellectuals, indigenous people, students, musicians, workers, artists, teachers, peasants, cultural groups, youth movements, alternative communication media, ecologists, tenants, lesbians, homosexuals, feminists, pacifists.

To all human beings without a home, without land, without work, without food, without health, without education, without freedom, without justice, without independence, without democracy, without peace, without tomorrow.

To all who, with no matter to colours, race or borders, make of hope a weapon and a shield.

## Brothers and Sisters:

Humanity lives in the chest of us all and, like the heart, it prefers to be on the left side. We must find it, we must find ourselves.

It is not necessary to conquer the world. It is sufficient with making it new. Us. Today.

Democracy! Liberty! Justice!

From the mountains of the Mexican Southeast. By the Clandestine Indigenous Revolutionary Committee General Command of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation. Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos. Mexico, January of 1996

The complete Declaration of La Realidad can be found on the World Wide Web at [www.peak.org/~justin/ezln/ezln.html](http://www.peak.org/~justin/ezln/ezln.html) or [www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/3849/gatherdx.html](http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/3849/gatherdx.html), alternatively, send two 45 cent stamps to the Rebel Lion, PO Box 6, Whalan NSW 2770 with your return address and I'll send you complete copies of both this and the 2nd Declaration of La Realidad.

# 10 ways to kill off an activist movement

Some guidelines to correct behaviour for those thinking of getting involved in the activist movement.

## 1. Panic!

The world is coming to an end. If not today, then certainly by next week. Anybody who isn't running around like a chicken with its head cut off just isn't pulling their weight. Of course, there's no time for proper planning or democracy or things like that in times of crisis, so, for the sake of the planet, shut up and get to work.

## 2. Know your elders and betters

Look, we appreciate your ideas, but we've been doing this sort of thing for a long time. There are certain ways of doing things and that's just the way things are. When you've had a few years experience working in groups that never get anywhere, maybe we'll be prepared to listen to you, until then, just do as you're told...

## 3. Play it safe

Don't demand anything too radical. Remember, most of the population aren't nice, educated liberals like us. Don't alienate them by demanding anything that goes further than a Labour Party policy document. In fact, just to be on the safe side, ensure your demands are limited to keeping things the way they already are. That'll bring in public support for sure.

## 4. Fear the public

Most people out there are racist, sexist, right-wing rednecks. Don't trust anybody outside the movement. Remember everyone hates communist stirrers like us, so keep your head down. The best thing is to keep your activism confined to the university campus where you can be sure most people are middle class. Of course, it also means most of the population won't know your group exists, but, hey, you can't have everything.

## 5. Never, ever, let a group set out its political agenda clearly

Look, we all know why we are here, don't we? There's no need to waste time putting it down on paper, besides, we're all united on these issues and nobody's going to trample over anyone else are they? Heh, heh, heh...

## 6. Talk a lot about consensus and democracy, but for heaven's sake, don't practice it

Never forget that you have everything figured out and other people are just trying to stuff things up. Avoid meetings, make decisions by yourself, or when it's just you and a few mates around. If meetings are inevitable, dominate them. Talk loudly and don't let other people get a word in. If criticised for this,

look hurt and talk (at length) about how much these issues mean to you.

Offer to facilitate, then use the position to push your own views forward. If you look likely to lose a point, cut debate short by pointing out that time is getting on and move on to the next agenda item.

Leave the meeting early (promote your carefully contrived image as a martyr to the cause by mentioning that you have two other meetings to go to that night) and never help to clear up the coffee cups.

## 7. Criticise the group for everything it isn't doing

Continually point out the group's insensitivity to issues it isn't concerned with. Get people to work on every issue you can think of at the same time, while continually predicting doom and gloom. Once everyone realises how hopeless everything is, they will, of course, redouble their efforts.

## 8. Appoint a paid coordinator (or two or three)

Ideally, this will result in one poorly paid person being expected to cope with the work previously done by a large group of volunteers, while at the same time wasting most of their time coping with the sort of useless people that wander into the offices of activist groups wanting to rave for hours about their paranoid conspiracy theories, make personal attacks on the coordinator for not having saved the world yet, or demanding help with some photocopying. In the longer term, a paid elite can create a rift between themselves and the volunteers expected to work for nothing.

## 9. Spend most of your time lobbying MPs

Even if parliament does decide to put a watered down version of your demands into law, you can be sure that the MPs concerned will grab all the credit and point to it as an example of our free and democratic system. Your group's support will vanish as everyone thinks the job has been done, even when the changes are mostly cosmetic. Regardless of whether you win or lose, none of the activists involved will feel any sense of empowerment, so no lasting changes in society will take place.

## 10. Make everyone else feel guilty

Any criticism directed at your policies can be countered by getting really upset. These people are out to destroy your movement - the movement that you have sweated blood to build out of nothing. Some don't even appreciate your dedication...



the rebel lion

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summer 1997